

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### North Carolina Birding Trail

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

We were hunting waterfowl, my three-year-old daughter and I, albeit in a completely benign way. It was early on a Saturday morning - too early for a three-year old to be up, but there was no changing that reality. In order to preserve someone's peace and quiet, we left mom and baby in bed while we went out for an early bagel and the hope of finding a goose at Asheville's Beaver Lake bird sanctuary.

The goose eluded us, but that doesn't diminish the importance of the site as a birding watching spot – important enough to be listed on the recently completed North Carolina Bird Trail – a driving trail of 310 of the best birding sites in the state.

The trail is the product of years of work by a handful of government and private organizations and comes at an important time in the bird-watching world. According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, hunting is in decline across the nation, fishing levels are steady, but wildlife watching, including birds, is increasing in popularity. In addition to hopefully boosting this wave of popularity and getting more people outside to bird watch, the trail may serve as an economic boon. In 2006, wildlife watchers spent nearly \$45 billion in pursuit of their hobby, and hopefully more of that money will flow to mountain restaurants, hotels and gas stations.

For more information, visit [www.ncbirdingtrail.org](http://www.ncbirdingtrail.org).

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peebles.